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THE RUSSIANS -- AND THEIR FRIENDS

By Eugene Lyons

Friendship for the Russian people over the heads of their Kremlin bosses, I am pleased to report, bids fair to become a vogue in these United States.

Today no reputable magazine would pull the political boner of which Collier's was guilty in late 1949, when, in advertising a series of articles on Soviet military officials in Berlin, it blazoned the cruel judgment "Russians Are Colossal Liars, Swindlers!" across full pages. No savvy Congressman would make the blunder of Representative Charles A. Eaton who, in a magazine piece in August, 1947, announced that Slav equals slave unto eternity -- philology of a dubious order.

Abuse of the Russian people, it is finally being recognized, has been the stock-in-trade of the Kremlin's apologists. They really had no choice. How could they rationalize the terror and the wretchedness except by portraying their victims as barbarians who must be driven along the road to Utopia with whips of iron dictatorship? Derogation of the tormented is implicit in glorification of their tormentors.

Thus Isaac Deutscher, in a biography of Stalin that added up to a justification of Stalin's butcheries, found himself referring to Russia repeatedly as "a nation of savages". Vincent Sheean, in This House Against This House, was compelled to describe Russians as a breed that had no "understanding" and no "desire" for freedom, and who therefore regarded "the abolition of practically everything we would recognize as freedom . . . as the easiest of all the sacrifices . . . to the better world of which they dream". And Walter Duranty has always argued that Stalin's "Asiatic absolutism" was "most fitted" to the character and folkways of his subjects.

Indeed, the attitude of outsiders to the Soviet phenomenon can be fairly stated in the form of a law of behavior: The greater the tolerance for the Soviet regime, the greater the contempt for the Russian people. It is altogether logical, therefore, that as fear of the Soviets and abhorrence of their system grows, a new appreciation of the Russian people -- their long ordeal, their 33 years of active and passive re-

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sistance to the dictatorship, their aspirations for freedom -- should also grow.

In any event, the present trend in the non-Soviet world, wholesome for all its tragic tardiness, is to draw a sharp line between the Soviet rulers and their victims. Americans are becoming less prone to damn "the Russians" for the sins of their overlords. The Saturday Evening Post summed it up in a recent editorial which began with the caption "Our Enemies Are the Red Tyrants, Not Their Slaves", and ended on this note:

"With the example before us of lost opportunities in Germany, during and after the war, by a policy which refused to distinguish between oppressors and oppressed within an enemy nation, we should take the greatest care not to repeat the error in Russia. Rekindling the hope of true freedom in the ordinary Russian is a weapon worth a hundred atom bombs. It may be our best hope of survival for ourselves."

II

About four years ago, in a letter published by the New York Times, I urged the need for a society of American friends of the Russian people, as a counterweight to Communist-front outfits like the Council of American-Soviet Friendship, which are friends of the Soviet state and therefore by definition enemies of the Soviet people. Before 1917, I pointed out, rebels against the Tsarist regime could count on the sympathy and help of liberals in the outside world, whereas Stalin's enemies inside the USSR felt themselves isolated, abandoned and ignored by free men.

Nothing happened at the time. But in recent months a number of citizens' groups have been launched here, pledged to promote the liberation of Russia in concert with its citizenry. One such organization expresses faith in ultimate deliverance in its very name: Friends of Fighters for Russian Freedom. Another, under the awkward title of Committee for Freedom for the Peoples of the USSR, has promised to provide moral and material support to fugitives from Stalin's prison-state, willing to fight the Soviet regime. Under the prodding of this Committee, various democratic Russian emigre groups are now engaged in setting up a unified center through which this American support could be channeled.

A new awareness of the duality of the Soviet state and its subjects is thus manifest. It is reflected in editorials and public speeches and is rapidly percolating down to the larger public opinion. How effective this sentiment and these organizations will be remains to be seen. But the new mood here is certain to alarm the Politburo far more than atomic detonations in Arizona. The explosions it fears most -- to the prevention

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of which it devotes a huge slice of its energies and resources -- are internal and political, particularly under the impact of a new war.

The Kremlin will never forget that the Germans were welcomed joyously by the populace in the early months of their invasion of the Soviet Union. The joy turned to bitter hatred when the population realized the Nazi "liberators" were just a brown variant of their red affliction. But the lesson surely has not been lost on Stalin and his associates.

Their panicky preoccupation with spies, saboteurs and other species of "enemies of the people" -- really enemies of the regime -- mirrors genuine fear. So do the reinforced barriers against Western thought and culture in the post-war years, apparent in purges of so-called "cosmopolitans" that have made "kowtowing to the West" the deadliest of political sins. The news that Americans are taking cognizance of internal Soviet tensions and exploring techniques for deepening them, in unison with the Russian people, is surely no laughing matter in Moscow.

III

The proffer of friendship to the Russian people, however, will prove self-defeating if it does not rest on a total, principled renunciation of the Kremlin and its works. Such friendship cannot be made to rhyme with policies of containment, co-existence and appeasement. It is turned into empty verbiage -- worse, hypocrisy -- unless it means honest commitment to bring closer the day of liberation. To carry conviction to the Russians and strike fear in the hearts of their oppressors, it must envisage the ultimate overthrow of the Soviet regime -- not merely its neutralization or containment in the interests of the West.

Suppose the foreign liberals of yesteryear who backed Russian revolutionary movements against Tsarism had made amicable relations with the Tsar's government one of their primary purposes. Obviously that would have made no sense. Today it makes even less sense to proclaim friendship for Stalin's subjects out of one corner of the mouth, while pleading for a reconciliation with Stalin's despotism out of the other side.

Yet that is precisely what some Americans seem to be doing, without quite realizing the contradiction. Recently Brien McMahon and about twenty colleagues introduced a resolution in the Senate attesting American friendship for the Russian people. It presented a good case in eloquent terms. Then it proceeded to cancel out the whole thing in a concluding statement that was in effect an abnegation: "The United States Government stands ready at all times to compose its differences with the Soviet Government through honorable negotiations."

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Having declaimed about their sympathy for the prisoners, the Senators announced their readiness to come to terms with the wardens! The Russian people -- at any rate the anti-Soviet segment to which we are addressing ourselves -- are determined not to compose their differences with Stalin, and are convinced that it cannot be done in any case. They cannot, as a matter of ordinary logic, relish a world settlement that condemns them permanently to their prison-house in a world half-free, half-slave.

Those of us who have lived close to the Soviet reality for a long time are almost unanimous in believing that the overwhelming majority of the Soviet peoples hate their rulers and dream of liberation from the Red yoke. Our conviction is supported vehemently by every fresh fugitive from the USSR. We see the proof of the great cleavage between the Kremlin and the people in the countless political prisons, the gigantic Soviet system of surveillance and repression, the continuous and massive purges, the terrific and incessant internal propaganda drives -- on an ever increasing scale. We see it in the hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens -- in their social composition a true cross-section of the population -- who refused to return home after the war; in the fact that the Kremlin, in its hour of peril as the war started jettisoned Communist slogans in favor of old-style patriotic appeals; in the million Soviet men who donned German uniforms to fight against the Bolsheviks.

But even if our judgment were mistaken, it is the only premise that makes logic in an appeal for popular Russian friendship. Psychological warfare becomes so much futile flailing of water if it does not seek to turn the people of the target nation against their government. The struggle against Soviet aggression and Communist subversion must be integrated with a struggle for the freedom of the Russian people. Only in that way can the Kremlin be effectively attacked at its most sensitive and vulnerable point: its dread of the terrorized and humiliated masses.

The Voice of America will be foredoomed to failure, so far as the Soviet Union is concerned, as long as Mr. Acheson plugs the idea that "the two systems, theirs and ours", can "exist concurrently", as he did in his California address of March 16, 1950. All propaganda aimed at the Russian people will remain abortive as long as we insist, again in Acheson's words, that "we are not attempting to change the government or social structure of the Soviet Union". To bring results our propaganda must summon the peoples of the Soviet sphere to stand up to their tyrants, and promise them our sympathy and aid when they do.

Eugene Lyons, who lived in the USSR for six years as a foreign correspondent, is the former editor of the American Mercury and is now on the editorial staff of The Reader's Digest.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events Vol. VIII, No. 13

By Frank C. Hanighen March 28, 1951

FATE OF WILSON: That Mobilization Boss Charles E. Wilson (of General Electric) still hangs his hat in his official quarters is one of those Washington mysteries which has led to several thumping, but wholly pardonable, misconceptions, as follows:

(1) That Wilson knows he's licked and is contemplating a sudden Jovian thunderbolt as he stamps out, slams the door and takes a plane for Schenectady.

(2) That Wilson has gone over to the Fair Deal -- lock, stock and barrel.

(3) That the General Electric marvel has sold Truman on some well-kept secret plan to step on the labor leaders and to impose iron control on the whole mobilization price-wage system.

None of these appraisals are, today, quite accurate. And the fact that good observers think one or the other guess may be right lights up one of the great "mysteries" of Washington which actually is no mystery at all.

There's an answer, although first of all one aspect must be noted, namely: that all the above three explanations rest on the assumption that Wilson realizes that he is no longer the unqualified boss of mobilization.

We can report, after an exhaustive check in the orbit of the Mobilization Boss, that Wilson -- believe it or not -- does not clearly realize his own plight. Our sources tell us (with some cynical giggles) that Wilson keeps running to Truman and demanding to be told whether the President still considers him the boss and will back him up. The President solemnly answers in the affirmative.

Now this almost incredible situation may change overnight. That Wilson will indefinitely fail to perceive the fact -- patent to everyone -- that he has been hog-tied and delivered to the slaughter block of the bureaucracy, is difficult to believe. Rather it seems likely that the true picture will soon come to him in a blinding flash. And he will get out.

Nevertheless, we have in this case history another example of a productive genius becoming a pathetic innocent when he takes over what he does not realize is only a political job. That is the "central mystery" of Wilson -- and it is no mystery to anyone familiar with the Washington formula. The business executive cannot achieve success (as success is understood in the business world) once he enters the political arena. His ethics, his values, his logic and his objectives are quite different from those that obtain in the essentially amoral world of bureaucracy. He is licked before he starts.

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RFC: Despite Senator Fulbright's announced desire to terminate his investigation, there are indications that it will go on. New and sensational material has come into the hands of Committee members relating to links between certain figures, highlighted recently in the probe, and the Communist network. It will be difficult for those who run the Committee to resist full airing of this Communist angle.

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FINANCIAL FIFTH COLUMN: One of the last unfinished plans of the late Ben Stolberg was to do an article on the Communist infiltration of American business. This came to mind last week when a former Naval Intelligence officer charged that a certain "Comrade Z" is actually running a number of varied business enterprises in this country. But that was not exactly what our late friend Stolberg (who had perhaps the best nose for such Communist subterfuges in our generation) really meant. The enterprises of "Comrade Z" which the former Naval Intelligence officer mentioned are small businesses, and the objective -- so that officer said -- was to provide funds for the Communist espionage apparatus here, a distinctly subsidiary mission. What Stolberg was after was infiltration of big business by highly-placed persons con-

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trolled by the Russian apparatus, the insertion of such individuals on the boards of large corporations for the purpose not only of industrial espionage but also of influence; the resultant political pressures on American banks, trading and manufacturing concerns by the local agents of the colossal customer in Eastern Europe; even the placing of "stooges" on the campaign committees of Democratic and Republican nominees for high office. All this may seem far-fetched to some American businessmen, but it is not.

Indeed, anyone who is familiar with the tactics of the Red network in other parts of the world would be surprised if such an organization did not exist within American business. This kind of activity has been familiar to observers in Western Europe for decades. In Germany, under the Weimar Republic, it had wide ramifications in banks, trading companies and manufacturing concerns. We ourselves were once permitted to look through an interesting official survey, well-documented, on the problem in France. As for the U.S., the task of Soviet agents should be -- should long have been -- quite easy in this field, in view of the proverbial innocence of American business. What could have been simpler than for Moscow to bankroll an indigent, corrupt business figure, so that eventually his name appeared on the board of large companies? If an Alger Hiss could make dupes of some of the highest figures in our business world, why shouldn't some of his colleagues have got away with it too?

It is not improbable that the FBI could present an array of such evidence. Hence the statement of Senator Ferguson on March 23 commands attention. He referred to the charges of the former Naval Intelligence officer, and urged the McCarran subcommittee on Internal Security to look into the matter. From what we have seen and heard in the last ten years, we think the McCarran group should take the Ferguson advice and spare neither high nor low levels of the business world.

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PERON AND PRENSA: It is highly commendable that the press in this country should deplore the ruthless seizure of the fine old Buenos Aires paper, La Prensa, heritor of the best standards of journalism. This example of Peron's intensifying despotism should underline the vulnerable position of freedom of the press in the sort of world we live in today. However, the treatment of this outrage by many commentators seems to us rather superficial. Peron emerges as an ogre, but little is said about how he became an ogre; nor is any lesson drawn applicable to our own problems.

Peron obtained the office of President of his country largely through our own imbecilic State Department -- another of the blunders too little recalled today. By trying to bulldoze the Argentine nation into voting against this rising pretorian, we succeeded only in turning the Argentine electorate in his favor. Rarely have the blunders of our intervention into the affairs of Latin-American states been exceeded in stupidity. In a fair and honest election, the Argentines voted for Peron and against U.S. meddling in their domestic affairs. HUMAN EVENTS in 1945-6 consistently criticized this intervention policy and warned of the inevitable result -- thereby offending a number of readers who supported the State Department line. The U.S. bears a heavy responsibility for the elevation of Peron to power.

Another sin is the failure of too many commentators here to understand and explain how Peron moved from his initial position as a constitutionally elected President to that of a true dictator. Many writers in our Leftist publications noted with approval how Peron acted in behalf of "social welfare" and of building up trade union power. But few saw the pattern in all its ominous aspects. For Peron gave bread and circuses to the new class of industrial workers, helped their unions and came to control them, meanwhile gradually undermining civil liberties. No one who has watched the rise of the CIO and its control by Roosevelt and Truman should miss the parallel. The case of La Prensa should admonish us that "it could happen here".

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THEN AND NOW: Great was the turmoil in the mind of Governor John Hancock of Massachusetts, on October 25, 1789. President George Washington was driving into Boston, and the Governor was perturbed lest he might compromise the dignity of the Common-

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wealth by going to greet this executive officer of the Central Government. After all, Massachusetts was a sovereign entity of far more ancient vintage than the Union, and in his mind protocol demanded that George Washington should first pay his respects to the presiding officer of the Commonwealth. . . .

That was long ago. By various constitutional and not-so-constitutional methods the several states of the Union have since been reduced to virtually parish status. It is now proper that one Estes Kefauver, the Chairman of a Senate sub-committee, march his crew into New York, issue subpoenas right and left, and, without even asking for let or leave of the local authorities, carry on a highly publicized and widely televised investigation of some of its citizens, including a former mayor. Nor does he hesitate to invite the Governor of that State to come before him to testify, as an ordinary witness, allowing it to be implied that failure to accept the invitation is tantamount to an admission of guilt of some sort. Are we citizens of a Union of sovereign states or subjects of an Empire?

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FORESIGHT: "How can anyone swallow the idea that Russia is battling for democratic principles", asked Senator Robert A. Taft, in a radio address on June 25, 1941, just after Hitler invaded Russia. "Yet the President on Monday announced that the United States would give all possible aid to Russia, the character and quantity of the aid to await only a disclosure of Russian needs. . . . To spread the four freedoms throughout the world we will ship airplanes and tanks and guns to Communist Russia. But no country was more responsible for the present war and Germany's aggression than Russia itself. Except for the Russian pact with Germany there would have been no invasion of Poland. Then Russia proved to be as much of an aggressor as Germany. In the name of democracy we are to make a Communist alliance with the most ruthless dictator in the world.

"But", continued Taft, "the victory of Communism in the world would be far more dangerous to the United States than the victory of Fascism. There has never been the slightest danger that the people of this country would ever embrace Bundism or Nazism. . . . But Communism masquerades often successfully, under the guise of democracy, though just as alien to our real principles as Nazism itself. . . .

"Will that part of the world which Stalin conquers with our airplanes and our tanks be consecrated to freedom of speech and expression? Will it be consecrated to freedom of every person to worship God in his own way? Will it be consecrated to freedom from want and freedom from terrorism? Or, after a Russian victory with our aid, must we step in with our armies to impose the four freedoms on 200,000,000 people 10,000 miles away, who have never known either freedom from want or freedom from terrorism? Surely Stalin won't do it. Surely we must know that Stalin's promises are as valueless as are those of Hitler himself."

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LATIN-AMERICAN LULLABY: There is a thing called the UN Economic and Social Council which meets every now and then in some beguiling spot, to ponder great issues, pass resolutions and generally to get things done in the UN way. Its most recent intellectual shindig took place in the balmy airs of Santiago, Chile. Several hundred UN people were transported by air to Chile and back -- and the check ran to about a half million dollars.

Washington has been vainly trying to discover the net accomplishments of the Santiago meeting. Certainly nothing was done on the high intellectual plane on which the delegates sought to confer; for they declined to investigate slave labor in Iron Curtain countries, or to probe the Prensa Affair. However, we may reveal that one constructive motion was passed -- and oddly enough it was not a double dome but an American businessman who did it. Slyly infiltrated into the gathering of minor Alger Hisses, a representative of the International Chamber of Commerce persuaded the conference to pass a motion calling on all UN nations to lift tariff charges on the sample bags of travelling salesmen!

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Book Events

Eleven Years In Soviet Prison Camps by Elinor Lipper. Chicago: Henry Regnery Co. $3.50. Reviewed by W. H. Chamberlin.

Of all living ex-Communists Elinor Lipper has perhaps paid the highest price for her youthful infatuation. Dutch by birth, Swiss by marriage, she drifted into Communism as an anti-Nazi student in Berlin in the early thirties. It was her misfortune to be in Moscow when a tremendous roundup of foreign Communists was under way in 1937.

Arrested and held for months in an incredibly crowded and filthy Moscow prison, she was shipped off to one of the grimmest of all the Soviet slave labor reservations, located in the Kolyma Valley of northeastern Siberia, perhaps the coldest spot in the world. After eleven years of this ordeal she was finally released, thanks to her foreign nationality.

She has written an outstanding narrative of her experiences, an epic "Uncle Tom's Cabin" of a system that has broken the lives of millions of human beings, in which every taskmaster is a Simon Legree. She possesses all the gifts for exposing Soviet slave labor in all its stark horror. She makes every phase of her experience come alive.

One can feel the terrific cold in winter, the bites of the mosquitoes in summer and the ever-present gnawing hunger. One can hear the guards, with their constant "Davai, davai, bistrei, bistrei" (Get on, faster) and taste the watery soup, which, with sour black bread, is the main nourishment on which prisoners are supposed to put in working days of twelve hours in the rugged Arctic climate.

The author's fellow-prisoners, in Moscow, on the fetid prison train, in the Kolyma area, take on flesh-and-blood qualities. They range from pious nuns and sectarians to the most abandoned criminals, male and female, the latter always receiving preference from the Soviet camp administrators, who stir up their class hatred and envy against the more educated "counterrevolutionary" prisoners. They are simple peasant girls and highly cultivated intellectuals, like the woman who can recite Pushkin's "Eugene Onegin" by heart and who diverted her companions in slavery by telling wonderful fairy tales.

Despite what she has gone through, the author makes the impression of a balanced, resilient personality, with an excellent gift of description and analysis and an irrepressible sense of humor. This last quality finds expression in a magnificent debunking job which Miss Lipper performs on the self-imagined martyr and anti-Communist, Owen Lattimore.

Lattimore saw Magadan and other places in the Kolyma slave labor reservation as part of a conducted tour for the benefit of our then Vice-President Henry Wallace and an accompanying party. Elinor Lipper saw these places as a prisoner. Their accounts could scarcely disagree more; and in this case it is not difficult to know who is telling the truth.

The author got hold of an article of gushing eulogy of the Kolyma slave labor concentration camps which Professor Lattimore published in The National Geographic Magazine of December, 1944. Among other high compliments Lattimore called the Kolyma reservation a "combination Hudson Bay Company and TVA" and spoke of the "high sense of social responsibility" of the chief Simon Legree, one Nikishoff -- without, however, mentioning the abnormal mortality rate of his wards. By the time Elinor Lipper gets through with her caustic comments on practically every statement in this article, Lattimore has been thoroughly deflated as an objective reporter. This is only one of many reasons why all Americans who are willing to face the facts of the slave economy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics should read this book. There is nothing better of its kind.

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European Supplement *to* Human Events Vol. VIII, No. 13

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By Bertrand de Jouvenel Paris -- March, 1951

FRENCH PRESIDENCY: President Auriol's reception by President Truman offers an opportunity to expound the spirit and workings of the French political structure -- something that baffles my American friends. As is well known, the French Presidency is quite unlike the American in point of selection and of powers. M. Auriol was not elected by the French people but by the two Houses of Parliament. He is not the chief of the Administration; the Cabinet heads that. He did not choose these Ministers as Mr. Truman selected his Cabinet.

This is how the Ministers are chosen: The outgoing Prime Minister advises the President of the Republic as to what political leader would most likely prove acceptable to the House. That leader, having been called, offers himself and his program to the elected representatives. If he receives a favorable vote, he sets himself to the task of selecting a team of Ministers, paying due attention to the allocation of portfolios among the various political groups which will add up to a majority in the House. Often the groups will insist on naming the occupants of the portfolios assigned to them.

When this higgling process is completed, the Prime Minister-designate returns to the House to ask for a vote of confidence in the Government he has selected. He may well have received a favorable vote when he first appeared alone, yet fail to receive it in the second instance. In that case, another leader must try his hand. The Cabinet, then, is nothing but a Committee of the House, carrying on the executive duties of government.

This is the French interpretation of democracy. It excludes the idea of a division of powers, such as the American Constitution provides for. It stems logically from the basic postulate of 1789, formulated by Sieyès, according to which the Parliament is the assembly of the nation as a whole; the Parliament is The Sovereign, embodying in itself all powers. It was on the logic of this idea that the Monarchy crashed, and by 1793 the idea reached its practical culmination in the division of the tasks of government among committees of the Assembly, capped by a supreme committee. It was as if, in the United States, the duties of the Secretary of State were discharged by the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the House, the duties of the Secretary of Defense by the Committee on the Armed Forces, the duties of the President by a special over-all committee.

Oddly enough, this French tradition of vesting sovereignty in the representatives of the people is more in line with the American tradition than it is with the current American trend. Government by committees representing Parliament is Jacobin, or Leftist, in origin and spirit; in America, on the other hand, it is the Rightest element that is calling for more of that kind of government. The "liberals" in the United States -- who definitely correspond to our Leftist element -- seek to invest the President with greater power and freedom of action, freedom from Congressional restraints. In France that is called bonapartisme, which is the general direction of the Gaullists.

At one time in French history, our political organization was modeled on the American (short of federalism). That was after the revolution of 1848 when the Second Republic was established. The fear of the reorganizers of the government was the disorderly tyranny of the Assembly in the First Republic, and it was to avoid a repetition of this sort of thing that they introduced the American idea of a strong Presidency. Tocqueville, the great student of America, had an important part in the setting up of the new institutions. Things went wrong when the people chose a con-

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servative Assembly and put over it, as President, the nephew of Napoleon. Louis-Napoleon contrived to let the Assembly make itself unpopular, so that it was no difficult matter to seize power and ultimately to make himself Emperor. That experience has discredited the idea of a strong Presidency in France.

After the defeat of 1870 and the fall of the Second Empire, when the Assembly applied itself to the remaking of political institutions, the election of a President by the people was dropped. Indeed, the Assembly showed an inclination to accept a constitutional monarchy. The Pretender, however, was uncompromisingly opposed to such limitations on executive authority. In the resulting tug of war over the powers of the Presidency, the Leftist Thiers found himself lined up against the Rightest Assembly; since he was not elected by the people, the Assembly exercised its power of deposition and replaced him with soldier MacMahon. His troubles with the Leftists in the Assembly were resolved when the ensuing elections gave his opponents a majority. Since this majority refused to work with any Cabinet named by him, he had to resign.

This outcome established the power of the Assembly to unseat any President it disliked. Any elected body wielding the power of the purse could effect the same result in any country, were its members convinced of its right to do so. The Assembly in France has always assumed that it is the expression of the General Will and the seat of all authority. Presidents elected since MacMahon have accepted this theory of government, and have scrupulously avoided taking a stand that might alienate any important faction of the Assembly, and for good reason.

The Assembly again asserted its sovereignty when it forced the resignation of Alexandre Millerand. After the elections of 1924, none of the men acceptable to the House for the position of Prime Minister would accept office under that President. Since he could not therefore offer a government that could win a vote of confidence, he had to resign.

The means by which the Presidency is shorn of authority is the relationship of the Assembly with the Ministers. Since the Ministers are responsible to the Assembly, then their tenure is dependent on its will, and it can get rid of the President by refusing to deal with Ministers selected by him.

It might be well to point out that while the French Presidency is subservient to the elected representatives of the people, quite unlike his American counterpart, he is however not without influence. He presides over most meetings of the Council of Ministers. In fact, the Council of Ministers bears this name officially only when the President does preside; failing his presence, it is called the Council of Cabinet. As presiding officer he is in position to offer suggestions. Though he must guard against antagonizing the Ministers, he still can be effective by putting in a word now and then. M. Auriol is not only the President of the Republic, but is also, since the death of Leon Blum, the most influential person in the Socialist Party, which has few men of stature.

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MINISTERIAL CRISES: While I am on the subject of the French political system, I might try to dispel a common misconception in America about our ministerial crises. The impression prevails there that when such a crisis occurs "France is without a government". That is inaccurate.

When a government has been defeated in the House, or breaks up because of internal disagreement, the President of the Council conveys to the President of the Republic the resignation of the entire team. Then they go back to their several departments and carry on with their functions until a new team is ready to take over. In the interim, the man called upon by the President to organize a new government does a bit of consulting. In most cases, he was a member of the former cabinet;

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hence the consultations with parliamentary leaders are carried on at the office of the department he still rules. This gives rise to a coming and going of cars with tricolor insignia, while cameramen lie in ambush in the ministerial courtyard. All this movement will culminate in a quick change, taking a minute or two: a new Prime Minister and a shuffling of positions within the Cabinet.

If the political importance of such crises is small, the moral significance is not negligible. They reveal the lack of regard for the public weal that characterizes the parliamentary world as a whole. Each group in the reorganization, each faction within the group, will go to almost any length to achieve another rung on the ladder of political preferment. The majority is a squabbling family in which each member is constantly ready to slam the door. Then comes the supreme political gift of conciliation. But, the middle-ground is not the locus of national interest, nor are the conciliators necessarily far-seeing statesmen. They must rather be versed in the whims, humors and special ambitions of the leading members of the family. They have little time or energy for the pondering of wide issues.

The squabbling, fussing and screaming of the ruling group tends to bring it into disrepute. For that reason, the French people periodically turn away from the parliamentary regime. They get tired of the way the parliamentary system is run. We may well be on the verge of another such spell of disgust. Votes for the Gaullist Party will not be an expression of confidence in that policy but a revolt against the present system.

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THE COMING ELECTIONS: The electoral system is the prime issue in the coming elections. French public opinion expects the present Assembly to adopt an electoral mechanism for the designation of its successor and then get out of the way. Previous to the last war, the deputies were chosen in single-member constituencies by the double ballot. On the first ballot, the voters chose from any number of candidates. Only when one of them won by an absolute majority was this election decisive. As a rule, this would happen in about a third of the constituencies. Where an absolute majority was not obtained by any one candidate, a second ballot would be taken a week later. In this second election, all but two or three of the candidates would retire from the contest, urging their electors to cast their ballots for one of the remaining candidates.

This system is well understood by the French electorate, and well liked. The Fourth Republic replaced it with a system of proportional representation. This has given the Communist minority, who have naturally fought to retain the system, an unusually large representation, and it sliced up the House into a number of parties. The Radicals, the Socialists and the Independents have been advocating a return to the old system, while the M.R.P. (along with the Communists) has held out against the change for fear of losing its position.

A compromise, which is not well understood, has come to the fore. The only thing clear to everybody is that the parties constituting the present majority propose to retain a majority in the next House even if they fall far short of it in the country. The device chosen for that purpose, as far as I understand it, is as follows: In various constituencies those parties which so desire can combine their votes and take all the seats by simple majority; apportioning them between themselves by quotas and freezing out the parties of the extreme Right and of the extreme Left, even though the latter may have a higher total vote.

This is a decisive year in French politics, and the people are not unaware of it. Resentment toward high-placed fiddling is quite common. It is being fanned by the current transport strikes in Paris, which are particularly exasperating to the poor who depend on the public means of conveyance. The coming election will simply record exasperation: votes will be votes against. Any interpretation of the result

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will fall short of the mark if it assumes that the French were in favor of what they apparently voted for. It is a foregone conclusion that they will simply have registered their disgust with the ruling circles.

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FRENCH CONFIDENCE RESTORED: On my return home I seized every opportunity to state that I interpreted the American decision to increase their garrisons in Continental Europe as an expression of confidence in France. I have been recounting the opposition to this policy that I encountered in the United States, stressing the fact that this opposition rested on doubt as to the attitude of Western Europeans, mainly the French. If we are not to make a major contribution to the defense of Western Europe, then the commitment of American forces would be futile and dangerous. The reluctance of many Americans to make such a commitment is understood.

Yet, when General Eisenhower asserted that, notwithstanding appearances, we could be counted on, French self-pride responded. Such an expression of confidence in our country is just what is needed to restore its self-confidence. For years, France has heard little but defeatist statements. Its leaders of opinion have been expounding the inevitability of impotence. Pride of country has been at a low ebb. Now that the country has been spoken to, the morale has taken a decidedly upward turn. It is regrettable that the first legislature of the Fourth Republic should have run its course without anyone with capacity to speak to the nation emerging from the Third Force parties.

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THE TURNING POINT: None of the oft-repeated pessimistic forecasts about France, especially by the French, has held up. In 1946 or 1947, it was predicted that inflation would run its course to the bitter end, that we would suffer prompt and complete disaster in Indo-China, that we could not hope to restore our balance of payments, that the Communists would inevitably seize power. The franc is still stable currency, the French are still in Indo-China, the external payments have been kept in balance through a higher volume of exports than ever before, the Communists have lost most of their aggressiveness, the French army is being rebuilt.

Now, if the elections are well conducted, if the electoral system is well chosen, if the period is well used to put before the French voter the facts of the world and the problems of the country, if a reasonable program of order and reform is offered to the French electorate, France could make a great comeback as the citadel of liberty and prosperity in Western Europe, and the focal point of European consolidation.

If the Third Force parties were led by men of stature, the opportunity would not be missed. There is not the least sign, however, that the present leaders see the opportunity. Therefore, it is highly probable that many of my countrymen will turn to Gaullism, perhaps not enough to make a majority, but enough to make impossible a Third Force majority. This is what the political experts predict.

Far be it from me to forecast the election; this would be foolhardy even if the new electoral system, which nobody understands well, did not make it impossible. But the possibility of a post-election parliamentary deadlock is in the minds of all the knowledgeable people. Surely, that is the last thing we want this year, when the defenses of Europe are in the making. What France needs, and what is in the realm of possibility, is that its leading politicians get together and seek the means of fulfilling the wish of the electorate for a moderate, stable and progressive government. Perhaps President Auriol will have something to say to them on the subject when he returns from the States.

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